

Restoration, Constructive not Destructive

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Imagine a people group living in a primitive settlement with hardly any civil facilities. Then a person comes and constructs a modern city in the neighboring, vacant land. He invites them to come and settle in the new construction and enjoy a far better way of living. He teaches them how to live a comfortable city life. Time passes on and many are attracted to it. They come and settle in the city. But some of them do not know how to live a civil life. They bring in their old belongings, including their cattle. They build shacks around their houses to make themselves feel as if they are in their old environment while still enjoying some of the city facilities. The number of these encroachers increases with time until they form the majority of the city's residents. In response to this, the City Council, or the Municipality, enacts a program to restore the city to its original form; although, many people oppose this restoration, wanting the city to continue to in its primitive-cum-modern mode. If the City Council were to win, the shacks and shackles would be removed and the city restored to its original modernity, but if the protestors win, the city would continue to be shaped by the encroachers. This is not an imagination but a fact that is happening in many cities all over the world.

Our world, in the past, was quite primitive in its beliefs. Zarathushtra rose, searched, researched, and inspired by the Divine Wisdom, founded the "Good Conscience", an entirely new progressive way of good life based on the "Primal Principles of Existence" that lead to perfection and eternity. The wise people of that time were attracted to its rationality and joined in the Fellowship. It also attracted others, still lingering with their primitiveness. They brought in their old beliefs and practices and mixed the two ways of living together. It changed the Good Conscience to a point that one simply could not recognize its original face and form.

A hundred years ago some wise elders thought of a reformation. The movement gained momentum to a point that the Zarathushtrian Assembly was established in 1990 to restore the Good Conscience to its pristine purity. It has been done, and the movement is gaining ground. It is spreading into the four corners of the world. Here is the declaration it made more than 14 years ago:

"The Zarathushtrian Assembly is a non-profit, non-political religious corporation established in 1990 in Los Angeles, California, the United States of America. While celebrating Nowruz and Zarathushtra's Birthday on 22 March 1991, it declared its existence. It is independent and is an authority and a responsible entity for all its activities.

It is first of its kind. It is unique. Contrary to what happens in reformatory movements, the establishment of the Assembly is not a protestant, sectarian, or denominational one, and a separatist move to split apart from an existing body. It has been formed as an outside organization, an organization which does not identify itself with Zoroastrianism as an ethnic entity or with any of its associations, institutions, and other sacerdotal, sanctified, social, financial, charitable, singular, or federated establishments. It lies outside the closed communal religious fold of the people generally known as traditionalist or orthodox Zoroastrians. It does not seek at all any recognition by any

authority/authorities of the traditional Zoroastrian community. In fact, it is not interested at all in any of the communal activities aimed at keeping the ethnic identity, maintaining the traditional rituals and ceremonies, safeguarding the culture, opposing conversion/acceptance, excommunicating persons of mixed marriages, and inbreeding to increase the ethnic number. The Assembly operates outside their circle.

Nevertheless, the Zarathushtrian Assembly is a Zarathushtrian organization, simply because it precisely follows Zarathushtra. It has, in theory and practice, restored the religion of Good Conscience to its Gathic purity and Zarathushtrian universality. It reserves the religious, constitutional, and legal rights to call itself and its members by the name “Zarathushtrian” and any of its variants—Zarathushti, Zartoshti, Zoroastrian, Mazdayasni, and Behdin.

The Gathas are the only guide in life for the members of the Assembly. Other Gathic texts are of explanatory importance. Its ceremonies, led by its own officiants, are based on the Gathic texts. All other parts of the Avesta and Pahlavi have only their ethical, historical, geographical, and anthropological values and therefore there is a placid place for them outside the doctrinal scripture: the Gathic texts.

Membership of the Zarathushtrian Assembly is open to all those who, of their own individual accord and after full consideration and conviction, choose the Good Religion and wish to belong to its World Fellowship. The Zarathushtrian Assembly belongs to the knowledgeable persons who are sincerely committed to the good, Gathic religion of the Mânthran, the thought-provoker, Righteous Zarathushtra. All are welcomed to participate in or witness its activities.

The Assembly teaches, preaches and practices the religion of Good Conscience. It delivers the Divine Message of Zarathushtra to all those who willingly wish to listen to it. It does not convert people because the Good Religion is only a religion of personal choice and not quested conversion. Any person who is a Zarathushtrian, either by free choice or by birth and upbringing, and has knowledgeably performed his or her initiation (navjote/sadreh-pooshi), can apply for the membership of the Zarathushtrian Assembly, and upon the approval of the application become a member and enjoy all the rights provided by the Constitution and Bylaws of the Assembly.

The Assembly respects all other religious organizations, Zoroastrian or otherwise. It recognizes even the institutions, which do not recognize the Assembly. It extends its hand of friendship to all. It harbors no ill will to any person or institution. And it hopes that this statement, made from a position of faith and sovereignty, will dispel all doubts in minds of the honestly concerned and that they will feel completely free to pay their full attention and time to their duties of good choice. (Spenta, the Assembly Bulletin, No.1-2, June-July 1991).”

As we see, there is a big difference between the restoration of a city and the Doctrine. For the city, all the encroaching additions are removed. There is a destruction of the superfluous to save the original construction. In the case of the Doctrine, the restoration takes place outside its encroached and changed form. It reconstructs itself as a separate and independent body. It is the result, which changes the situation. Those in the encroached form of the Doctrine see for themselves and realize the condition they have been living for so long. They abandon their old

ways and move to the pristinely “restored” Doctrine. That means the ultimate desertion of the institutionalized creed.

The literate youth form the majority of those who choose to go over to the pure and pristine Doctrine. And it is this youth who, still active within their institutionalized organizations, invite certain Assembly members to give talks and enlighten community members on the basics of the restored Doctrine and if asked, provide them with the proven information on the additions made to surround it. Otherwise as said, the Assembly has its own place of religious gathering in every city in which it has its branch or associated organization. Assembly members never attend any gathering of the institutionalized Zoroastrians without a prior formal invitation.

This is what really shakes those who see their authority being lost. The entire uproar raised by them has only this as THE reason and motive. And they know well that they cannot convince their religious fellows of the advantages and benefits of living within their “doctrinal houses surrounded by institutionalized beliefs”. Those guardians of this institutionalized Zoroastrianism have no MESSAGE to expound and prove the superiority of their creed. Therefore, they do not engage in any cool and calm dialogue and discussion that could at least come to the conclusion that the two “agree to disagree” and let each other live in peace. All one hears is the uproar of insults, name-calling, ridicule, rumor and even foul language. How long this state of affairs is going to last, one may wait and see the ultimate result. However, one may also look forward for the sound sanity that would usher in peace, prosperity and happiness—through USHTA, radiant enlightenment.

The Restoration of Good Conscience to its pristine purity has proved beyond doubt that the RATIONAL Divine Doctrine of Zarathushtra Spitama was MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY or Spiritually and materially practical and inspiring in the past, it is more practical and inspiring in the present times, and it shall be far more practical and inspiring in the future. It is “MĀNTHRA SPENTA, Thought-provoking Progressive”. It is very progressively CONSTRUCTIVE and never destructive. And it is attractive!

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